

"Gentlemen,—In presenting you with my report for the year, I am pleased to be able to inform you that generally the health of Milton is favourable. This is all the more satisfactory considering the fearful mortality produced by the recent epidemic in the neighbouring town of Maidstone and the prevalence of disease in many places in constant communication with our town.

"*Births*.—The births for the year numbered 192.

"*Deaths*.—The total number of deaths for the year was 117. Of these 69 occurred in the town and 48 in the Workhouse Infirmary. The death rate per

thousand, excluding the Workhouse, was 11.6. Including the deaths of inhabitants of Milton in the Workhouse Infirmary the death rate was 14.4 per thousand. In examining the death table it will be noticed that the death rate is low, and that, though there were 24 deaths under one year, the larger proportion by far were of people over 65 years of age.

"*Zymotic Diseases*.—During the year 46 cases of zymotic disease were notified as follows:—Scarlet fever 21, diphtheria 6, erysipelas 7, typhoid 12. Each case was investigated and the cause, where possible, ascertained. Isolation and disinfection were thoroughly carried out in most cases.

"*Scarlet Fever*.—Two deaths have been registered from this disease. One occurred in a boy aged six, and was attributed to complications; the other was in a puerperal woman. It cannot be too well known (so that every precaution may be taken) that scarlet fever is particularly liable to prove fatal in such cases. The remaining cases were not of a severe type and were scattered in various parts of the town. I regret to say that in some cases the relatives or friends objected to the patients being treated in the Isolation Hospital, so it is possible that some fresh cases may occur. Some cases having previously occurred in neighbouring villages, it is probable that the first cases at any rate that occurred in the town were of imported origin.

"*Enteric Fever*.—Most of the cases under this heading occurred during the latter half of the year, as is commonly the case. Many of them were treated in the Isolation Hospital, and all did well, there being no death recorded from this disease. A fact that forced itself on my observation in investigating these cases was that some of the patients had, for some days before being taken ill, either worked on barges carrying "rough stuff," or had been engaged in unloading it. It is, I think, probable that the "rough stuff" containing organic refuse in varying proportions would be a suitable soil for the germs of enteric fever, and that those in constant contact with it might, through dirty clothing, want of cleanliness, and in other ways readily become infected.

"*Diphtheria*.—The few cases that have occurred during the year have been of a very mild nature, no death being registered. As far as could be ascertained, no insanitary condition was responsible for these cases.

"*Erysipelas*.—Some of these, though apparently of an idiopathic nature, were of a severe type. They occurred principally in very old people in a low state of health. Only in one case was it probable that local conditions favoured the manifestation.

"*Measles and Whooping Cough*.—There were a few cases of measles during the year, but nothing like an epidemic. Whooping cough has been very prevalent, and there are now a good many cases in the town. These diseases are unquestionably spread by the crowding together of children in schools, Sunday schools, and other places, and, unless the earlier cases are promptly detected and isolated, it is difficult to say how this can be prevented. The school authorities, who frequently get early information of the occurrence of infectious disease among scholars, could render great help if they would apprise the sanitary officials of any suspicious case or cases that might come to their knowledge.

"*Inspections and Sanitary Work*.—The Inspector's journal shows that 166 visits were made during the year. The visits were in connection with inspections and accumulations of dung, defective drainage, faulty closets, and other nuisances. The various districts of the town have been systematically inspected. The slaughter-houses, cowsheds, and bakehouses have been regularly visited and found as a rule in a wholesome and sanitary condition, and any improvement required has been willingly made. The dairies are well ventilated and kept in a very cleanly state. The cows are for the greater part of the day in the open, and no case of tuberculosis has been noted by our veterinary authorities during the year.

"*Lodging-houses*.—The lodging-houses are kept in a fairly orderly state, but are vigilantly watched. Forming as they do a centre of attraction for a great number of the tramping community (who hail from all parts), they are particularly liable to infection. It is necessary in their case to strictly enforce all sanitary rules. On the occurrence of infectious disease prompt measures are immediately taken. The fellmongers and tallow manufacturers' factories have been inspected, and found well limewashed and in a cleanly state. During the year steps had to be taken to destroy some carcasses found in a slaughter-house, also to prevent the sale of watercress gathered from a polluted source.

"Complaints having been made about the nuisance caused by the burning of the refuse of rough stuff in the brickfields in the open, the matter was investigated. It was found that this process is not an essential of brickmaking, but an economical means of disposing of this refuse, and that it could be dealt with in other ways, either by being carried out of the town or better still by being treated in a destructor. Representations were made to the brickmakers, with the result that this grave nuisance (a cause of much discomfort and probably of ill-health in the town) has been greatly mitigated, if not done away with altogether.

"*Houses*.—Many of the basements of the houses in the vicinity of the Creek having been flooded by the late high tides it was deemed prudent to give orders to have them cleansed, dried, and disinfected. Many houses were built during the year; they are, I am informed, all provided with water cisterns, and the water and drain pipes have been thoroughly inspected and tested before being covered in. The old houses mostly situated in the lower portion of the town were recently inspected; they are very old and dilapidated and sadly in want of repairs. In some cases the back yards at the time of our visit were very dirty and contained stagnant pools of water; they require paving or cementing. This pollution of the surface soil surrounding dwelling-houses is a real danger, and is I believe accountable for a good deal of ill-health. Some of the houses themselves were in a filthy condition. In two rooms of one house visited (the windows of which were closed) the floors were strewn with rags and bones, and the odour arising from them was simply nauseating. Prompt measures were taken to remedy this nuisance. It is a pity, I think, that, at a time when so much ignorance of the value of general cleanliness exists, the County Council should see fit to discontinue the grant for technical education to Milton. The lectures on ambulance, nursing, and home hygiene did a great deal of good and diffused a good deal of useful knowledge, and certainly tended to prevent the fouling of the home in the way above mentioned.

"*Water*.—The supply of water has been good and the quality excellent. The recent analysis by Dr. Stevenson placed this beyond doubt and should be most reassuring.

"*Wharves*.—The manure wharves were frequently visited. On the last occasion manure at one wharf was found too near a dwelling house; this was recommended to be removed.

"Two very important sanitary problems are pressing for solution, these are the cleansing of the Creek and the disposal of our sewage. The condition of the Creek—about which so much has been written—at low tide is little better than an open sewer. It is not only a menace to the health of the community, but a standing disgrace to the town of Milton. Whether a conference is held or not, I hope the sanitary authorities will come to an understanding with the other interested parties and devise some practical scheme that will remedy this long standing evil. The treatment of the sewage by means of the septic tank system is shortly, I believe, to come under your consideration. It is a very important question and will require the closest attention. With regard to the system, I can only say that, from the results of the exhaustive and thorough enquiry recently held at Exeter, and from the high opinion of it held by eminent scientists and the favourable reports published in the *Lancet* and *British Medical Journal*, I should hope that, provided local conditions permit, the system would prove an economical and efficient way of treating the sewage.

"The smoke nuisance has at times been very trying and caused a good deal of discomfort. I feel sure that if the offending parties were communicated with an improvement could be brought about.

"In conclusion, may I hope that in future all inhabitants will do their best, by attention to sanitary rules, and by reporting any nuisance of which they may be cognisant, to help the sanitary officials in their endeavour to keep their town in a cleanly and healthy state.—E. J. MARMION, M.B., &c., M.O.H."

